

## Fact Sheet 1

# Bloodsworth Island Range

## Overview



### What is Bloodsworth Island Range?

Bloodsworth Island Range consists of five islands: Great Cove (submerged), Adam, Pone, Northeast and Bloodsworth.

Bloodsworth Island is the northernmost and largest in this chain of marsh islands. It is located at a point just north of the confluence of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Bloodsworth Island Range is situated between Hooper's and Holland Straits and Tangier Sound, approximately 3.5 miles west of Deal Island and 1.5 miles south of Bishops Head.

Located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Bloodsworth Island is one of three major islands (South Marsh Island and Smith Island comprising the remaining two) in the lower Chesapeake Bay. Before As land bridges eroded away, the islands were probably contiguous with the mainland, as were all the islands from Hooper's south to Smith.

Just after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a combination of erosion and storm tides forced agricultural operations to cease on the Bloodsworth Island Range. The islands have been uninhabited since the early 1900s.

The 6,013 acres in Dorchester County, Md., were established as a U.S. Navy range in 1942.

### Why did the Navy transfer ownership of Bloodsworth Island Range?

Due to Navy regionalization efforts, Bloodsworth Island Range was transferred to Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, headquartered at Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River, Md., from Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va., on March 27, 2001.



An aerial view of Bloodsworth Island Range, top.

A closer look at the island and its tributaries, middle.

The marshes on Bloodsworth with Fin Creek Ridge, the highest point on Bloodsworth, in the background.

*Photos provided by NAS Patuxent River Photo Imaging Lab.*

NAS Patuxent River is a natural choice for the transfer of ownership within the Navy since Bloodsworth Island Range lies within NAS Patuxent River's special-use airspace.

In addition, NAS Patuxent River used the range continuously from 1942 to the present, and, historically, provided environmental and natural resource management for the islands. The transfer of ownership secures the future of this valuable military asset. Assuming ownership of Bloodsworth Island Range allows NAS Patuxent River to further its mission as the Navy's principle center for research, development, test, evaluation, engineering and fleet support activities for naval aircraft, engines, avionics, aircraft support systems and ship/shore/air operations.

### How has the Navy used Bloodsworth Island Range? What are the current and future plans for military activity?

Historically, training was the primary mission for Bloodsworth Island Range. Activities have included:

- Naval gunfire support (1942-1980s)
- Air-to-ground bombing (1942-1995)
- Aircraft strafing with guns and rockets (1942-1995)

The mission for Bloodsworth Island Range has gradually shifted to a test and evaluation focus. Current activities include:

- Visual, non-impact targeting
- Aircraft radar evaluation
- Night vision system testing
- Electronic system testing

The extent and focus of future operations at Bloodsworth Island Range are being explored. As with any change in activities, an environmental analysis will be conducted if alternative operations are required.

### Who has used Bloodsworth Island Range?

Bloodsworth Island Range is an asset that has provided a location vital for military training, testing and evaluation, not only for the Navy but also for other military organizations, including:

- Air National Guard units
- U.S. Air Force
- Special forces
- Unmanned aerial vehicle squadrons

Although the range was used by a variety of groups, currently only activities sponsored by NAS Patuxent River are taking place at the range.

### What are the benefits of NAS Patuxent River managing Bloodsworth Island Range?

NAS Patuxent River is an active proponent for the environment and natural resource conservation. As such, NAS Patuxent River endeavors to see that Bloodsworth Island Range continues to provide beneficial habitats for a variety of birds native to the Chesapeake Bay area, particularly, migratory birds or over-wintering waterfowl.

The Navy instituted guidelines for all activities at the range that will protect these species, and actively pursued avenues to further enhance their habitats. The community and nation as a whole benefit from this Navy asset as it provides our military forces with effective test, evaluation and training capabilities that are vital to the success of our national defense. Furthermore, these capabilities allow the Navy to continue to enhance current technologies that can then be converted for use in the civilian aviation industry.

## The Bloodsworth Island Range

